

7 December 1951

SURVEY OF OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

A survey of OCI was conducted between 19-30 November. Interviews were held with AD/CI, his deputy, the heads of his different staffs and of the Special Support Division. The work of the area desks was reviewed. Two full meetings of the Publication Board were audited, one while the Board was auditing a Current Intelligence Bulletin and one while it was editing the Weekly Review. An Agency briefing in the Situation Room was attended.

Following is a statement of the strengths, weaknesses and problems observed in this survey.

A. STRENGTH1. COMINT

OCI produces all source intelligence but one of its strengths is the high reliability factually of COMINT intelligence. The only publications of the Agency which are purely factual emanate from OCI, particularly the Weekly Situation Summary appearing on Fridays. This comment is not intended to disparage the evaluation function, obviously one of the principal functions of an intelligence agency, but it is considered an element of strength that there is available through OCI a weekly summary of current intelligence undiluted if unadorned by subjective interpretation. This is not required by [redacted]

2. Indications File

The maintenance in OCI Soviet Strategy Staff of the Indications File, created on the initiative of the Intelligence Staff and Soviet Strategy Staff of OCI (actually [redacted]) should be commended. This file is said to be unique in Government and it is the only place in the Agency where the facts which might be expected to indicate Soviet intentions and leanings in political and economic fields as well as military are indexed so that one can quickly run back through summaries of all the intelligence we have received bearing upon any particular indication. The check list of indicators is constantly reviewed and revised.

- 2 -

3. Alertness

Closely allied with the above is the alertness of OGI to current intelligence of interest to the Watch Committee or indicating the necessity for emergency action on the highest levels. OGI seems highly aware of its responsibility of avoiding surprise.

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5. Administration

OGI should also be commended on its streamlined administrative staff. It has avoided the bureaucratic temptation to have too many administrators. Its direct administrative staff is only 5 persons, excluding 6 receptionists, 4 engaged in reproduction and 3 secretaries. This staff has all housekeeping functions for the office and maintains its personnel office and provides logistical support for OGI. OGI's Policy and Liaison Staff, which in addition to liaison functions with other offices in the Agency must keep two men practically on full-time duty at Arlington Hall, has a total of only three people and one secretary; and its Special Support Division, which has functions within OGI of an Office of Collection and Dissemination, which is responsible for OGI communications, watch officers and couriers and for establishing and integrating special and collateral requirements of OGI, operates with a total personnel of 46 of whom only, for example, read and route all the raw intelligence reports coming into the office.

It is possible, as indicated below, that the virtue of streamlining the administrative staff in OGI has been carried so far that certain weaknesses have been created.

- 3 -

B. WEAKNESSES

1. Authority

A weakness in OGI is the limitation upon the authority of AD/CI in dealing with other Agency Assistant Directors to discharge his responsibility for the security and development of special sensitive intelligence. This weakness arises from the historical fact that the work of this office with relation to COMINT was formerly done by an advisory committee which was part of the Director's staff. This committee, outranking other offices, was able to assert the authority which is necessary to safeguard COMINT. Now these functions are on an office level identical with that of other offices. A proposed new set of regulations, prepared by Mr. Becker and reviewed by the undersigned, will solve this problem if acceptable to DCI.

2. Limited Knowledge

An important weakness in the intelligence production of CIA is the limited scope of intelligence material, particularly about Soviet Russia, which is received. Of course, this is essentially a weakness of the collecting offices but there are two classes of material available within Government which OGI does not receive and which it should have; namely, (a) memoranda of interviews in the State Department with returning ambassadors and diplomatic personnel and (b) military reports (operational data).

3. A Close and Effective Working Link with ONE

No comment can be made on this problem until after the survey of ONE but it is clear there is a lack of coordination.

4. A Recognized No. 2 Man

The absence of a staff officer who is recognized as an adequate substitute for AD/CI should anything happen to him is a weakness of the office.

- 4 -

5. Security weakness at AFSA

OCI is concerned about security weaknesses at AFSA. This question has not been investigated because it involves responsibility for AFSA, a larger question, beyond the scope of this survey, upon which AD/CI has briefed the Director.

6. Publications

It is possible that OCI is "publication happy". The Chief of the Publications Board spends all of his time conducting editorial board meetings. Much of the material is so hastily prepared that it reaches this Board without adequate editing. The Chief and the editorial staff should have time to edit for form before Publication Board meetings, to leave for the Board only questions of substance. One of the publications, the Current Intelligence Review, is so completely an editorial and research effort that it would seem logically to belong in ONE or in ORR. The intelligence it uses is really not current. Assignments are made weeks in advance of publications.

0. CONFLICTS

1. AFSA

OCI depends very largely on COMINT intelligence and has the security responsibility for such intelligence. Yet it has no control of AFSA and cannot even assign priorities as to the traffic AFSA should give attention to.

It is not clear who has authority to request more field positions or to determine, for example, whether we should seek to intercept clandestine traffic, i.e. traffic of agents of other countries. This problem, however, goes beyond the scope of this survey.

2. Fort Knox

A real threat to the capacity of OCI to function as required by the Agency is involved in the proposed move of AFSA to Fort Knox. The problem involved here, too, is beyond the scope of this survey and is not elaborated upon here because of the understanding that the Director has been thoroughly briefed upon this question and is conversant with all the problems created for the Agency by this proposal.

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- 5 -

D. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Personnel

The surveyor was very highly impressed by the quality of personnel in the Office of Current Intelligence on all the lower echelons as well as by the staff and division chiefs. The Deputy to the AD/CI seems to be a first class administrator but it would seem to the undersigned that it would greatly strengthen the office if there were another high level officer heading, for example, the Policy and Liaison Staff, with the capacity to take over all the duties of AD/CI. The Chief of the Intelligence Staff [] may be (and appears to be) such a person, but there is a weakness in the office on this level which should command the serious attention of AD/CI.

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Recommendation

That AD/CI select his No. 2 man and train him, as a man capable of replacing AD/CI.

2. Administrative Section

This section consists of three staffs: a Policy and Liaison Staff; an Administrative Staff and a Special Support Division. Sufficient comment has been made above with respect to this part of the office. A change is being made in the Chief of the Administrative Staff and the Policy and Liaison Staff is now headed on a temporary basis, but by a man [] who impressed the undersigned as intelligent and appreciative of the problems of his office.

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Recommendation

The DAD/CI has the administrative functions well in hand. No recommendations.

3. Intelligence Staff

The Intelligence Staff, consisting of four men and three girls, charged with the duty of reviewing the current intelligence mission of the office and directing production and publications, is ably headed by [] and his deputy, [] as are its

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- 6 -

two principal staffs: the Publications Board under [] and the Soviet Strategy Staff under []. These men are all good, able, intelligent, imaginative and devoted to their jobs.

Recommendation

None necessary.

4. Publications Board

OCI publishes (1) the Current Intelligence Review, issued on Wednesdays; (2) Current Intelligence Bulletin, issued daily; (3) the Situation Summary, issued weekly on Fridays; (4) the Daily Digests of which there are three: one Top Secret, one cable supplement and one code supplement; (5) the weekly cable supplement for the Director and (6) occasional special items. This comprises a very substantial publication program. In the writer's opinion the Current Intelligence Review is not truly a current intelligence publication. See supra, B.6.

Recommendation

- a. That an effort be made to permit a member of the editorial board to do a rewrite job, as to form, on all material before the Board meets to consider it. There is an experienced newspaperman on the Board capable of doing this job []. This would shorten the work of the Board, and give the division chiefs, who meet with the Board, and [] its chairman, more time to think.
- b. That consideration be given to dropping the Weekly Review as a weekly, and issuing it every two weeks, or only when in the opinion of the editorial board it had something to say.

N.B. [] dissents from b.; thinks Review should be improved, but continued as a weekly.

- 7 -

5. Soviet Strategy Staff

This staff, operating under a misnomer, reviews current intelligence from a functional angle and maintains short and long run indicators and check lists affecting Soviet orbit capabilities and intentions from the political, economic and military points of view. It also publishes the Weekly Situation Summary, an all-source factual review, without comment, of the week's intelligence reports. The dummy is set up on Wednesday afternoon and edited Thursday afternoon and evening, but it is organized to include intelligence received right up to publication time and has frequently been changed at the last minute for stop press items. The staff consists of three in the Chief's office, four in the political field, three in the economic field, three in the military and two in all others. It is the only board in OGI which analyzes its intelligence from a functional point of view rather than on an area basis. This is the primary distinction between the Soviet Strategy Staff and the Soviet Division in OGI, the Soviet Division being merely a concentrated area desk.

The Chief of the Intelligence Staff of OGI would like to relieve the Soviet Strategy Staff of its publication duties and use it as a research staff to analyze intelligence information received in past periods from the point of view of hypotheses suggested by the indicator check lists. The thought is to test the suggested hypothesis to ascertain whether the indicators provide a pattern which really does suggest future action. By such analysis it is hoped to find out whether action which already has taken place could have been predicted from the way the intelligence questions cumulatively strengthen the indications followed on the check list. This is an intelligent approach to the problem of analyzing the meaning of current intelligence but it does not seem to the undersigned that this effort would require the attention of the entire Soviet Strategy Staff.

Recommendation

It is suggested that the Chief, [] and one assistant work on the above "laboratory" program for six months and be relieved of publication duties during that time, turning the responsibility for the Situation Review over to a selected member of the staff.

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- 8 -

6. Functional Division

The organization chart of OCI provides for a Functional Division to produce all source current intelligence for all areas on a functional basis. This division has not been manned, however, and is not operating, and does not seem to be necessary.

Recommendation

That the Functional Division be formally abolished.

7. Situation Division

The Situation Division maintains the Situation Room which is used as a meeting place by the Publications Board and where selected intelligence is converted into graphic form. It is the Situation Division which conducts the bi-weekly briefings given to other offices of the Agency. In the main, these briefings are a rehash, with graphic aids, of the intelligence in the Situation Summary.

The use of graphic aids, maps and charts could be very helpful in the work of the Agency, particularly in saving time and giving a clear picture to the people in the higher echelons who are not working with the raw material of intelligence except in its edited and published form. Properly the Situation Room should be adjacent to the Director's office and all staff meetings and PRC meetings should be held in the Situation Room where a display of maps and charts would give visual substance to the significance of some of the problems discussed. It is realized that this is impractical under our present housing conditions but it is mentioned so that it may be considered if the situation is ever changed.

At present the Situation Room and the briefings held therein do not serve any really productive purpose in the Agency except to build morale by giving a picture of the over-all current intelligence problem and production to Assistant Directors and their deputies who are working in other fields. For lack of manpower, the graphic portrayals have not been kept up and are at present little more than is available in any good news magazine.

- 9 -

Recommendation

That the needs of the Agency would be better served if the regularly scheduled briefings were reduced, at least for a period, and primary emphasis be placed on preparing the charts, maps and other graphic aids which should be included in the Situation Room. Special briefings, when important new special situations arise or when uniquely informed talent is available, should be continued.

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8. Area Desks



Some consideration was given to the question of whether a night shift would be desirable on the area desks to keep the work more up-to-date. At this point, it is thought that very little would be gained by this and much would be lost by dividing the work of the branch chiefs. This is a question which would deserve reconsideration if the volume of current intelligence material expands substantially in the future as a result of either an expansion of OSO or a substantial expansion of our intercept stations.

- 10 -

Recommendation

The recommendation above as to publications would give the area chiefs more time to supervise the work in their divisions. The only basic need in the area divisions is more manpower.

Stuart Hedden